

INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS

For the Fast of LENT 1800,

ADDRESSED TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE LONDON DISTRICT.



Now, therefore, saith the Lord, be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. Joel ii. 12.

ALTHOUGH every period of life is a fit time of conversion to the Lord, for those who are unhappily separated from him by sin; nevertheless, it is unquestionably true, that the motives of conversion from sin are more urgent in the penitential season of Lent than at any other time of the year. For this penitential season is observed by the Church as a preparation for worthily celebrating the great mysteries of our salvation at the succeeding solemnity of Easter; when the Faithful are required, under the threat of being cut off from her communion, to approach the table of our Lord, to receive the bread of life, the pledge of future glory. Oh! how fatal, Brethren, would be the consequence of your neglecting to approach to this angelical banquet, on one hand; or of your coming to it without the nuptial robe of grace, on the other!

We observe that, in the text set down above, the Prophet calls upon sinners to be converted to God with all their heart; and by what means is this conversion of the heart to be wrought, but by those which God has appointed for the obtaining of his grace, viz. the sacraments of his Church, mental and vocal prayer, the works of mercy corporal and spiritual, hearing the word of God, and the frequent and regular reading of good books?

By the same rule, Brethren, it is obviously necessary for the purposes of a sincere conversion to avoid the sinful diversions of the world, and the dangerous infection of bad books; to which the prevalence of infidelity and of immorality is in so great a degree owing. Amongst the publications which it is our duty to caution you against reading, we feel the deepest grief at being obliged to rank those of one of our own brethren, as misrepresenting the Catholic Doctrine, and maintaining or insinuating many erroneous opinions, viz. those of the Rev. Joseph Berington.

This Clergyman, by explanations of various obnoxious passages in his writings, by expressions of sorrow for the scandal his writings had caused, by the declaration that it should be his future endeavour to repair every such injury, and by his signing of the Profession of Faith published by Pope Pius the Fourth, had induced us to believe that the scandal would be thereby removed, and that his faith was pure and orthodox. But alas! late productions of this writer have again scandalized the Faithful, renewed their complaints against him, and diffused a general disbelief of the sincerity of his former explanations and declarations.

Besides the conversion of the heart which manifests itself *in weeping* and *in mourning*, we observe the heavenly Messenger requires that the sinners whom he addresses should afflict themselves with exterior mortifications. He calls upon them to be converted to the Lord *in fasting*. And since a solemn Fast is now proclaimed; a Fast in which the whole Church will unite in seeking to appease the wrath of Heaven; let us obey the summons in the true spirit of penance. The calamitous times in which we live, the arduous contest we have to maintain against the enemies of public order and religion, the safety of our Country, the protection of the government of our most gracious Sovereign, and above all the consciousness of our manifold sins, must move us to a faithful observance of it: that through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.

With this view, we ordain that Wednesday the Twelfth of next Month be observed as a day of extraordinary fasting, humiliation and prayer, in order to obtain from Heaven that aid to his Majesty's arms, which may bring at length the present just and necessary war to a happy issue. We accordingly appoint that the Clergy of the London District, who officiate to congregations, shall on that day offer the sacrifice of the Mass (*Missa tempore belli*) for the said purpose: and we earnestly exhort all the Faithful devoutly to assist at the said public office.

According to the discipline of the Church in this kingdom, we are to abstain from the use of Flesh Meat, of Eggs and of Cheese, through the whole Lent: but as the scarcity and consequent dearness of provisions require a relaxation of that discipline, we accordingly grant the following

ALLOWANCES FOR LENT.

1. Flesh Meat is allowed on all Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays for five weeks, beginning with the first Sunday, and ending with the Thursday before Palm Sunday. On the Tuesdays and Thursdays this allowance is for once only in the day.

2. Eggs are allowed on all days, excepting Ash Wednesday and the four last days of Holy Week.

3. Cheese is allowed every day, excepting Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.